

1
2
3
4
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BEFORE
THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF
SOUTH CAROLINA

DOCKET NO. 2017-318-T

IN RE: APPLICATION OF JB MOVERS, INCORPORATED FOR A
CLASS E (HOUSEHOLD GOODS) CERTIFICATE OF
PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY

DEPOSITION OF: ANDREW CHOATE (By Telephone)

DATE: January 3, 2018

TIME: 1:02 P.M.

EXPEDITE

LOCATION: Law Offices of
Adams and Reese, LLP
1501 Main Street, 5th Floor
Columbia, SC

TAKEN BY: Counsel for the Applicant

REPORTED BY: Wanda K. Cecil
Certified Court Reporter

A. WILLIAM ROBERTS, JR. & ASSOCIATES

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(INDEX AT REAR OF TRANSCRIPT)

ANDREW CHOATE - EX. BY MR. PRINGLE

1 MR. PRINGLE: My name is Jack Pringle
2 and I'm the attorney for the applicant, JB Movers,
3 Incorporated, in Docket Number 2017-318-T, the
4 application of JB Movers, Incorporated for a Class E
5 (Household Goods) Certificate of Public Convenience
6 and Necessity.

7 Jenny, why don't you just go ahead and
8 introduced yourself?

9 MS. PITTMAN: I'm Jenny Pittman. I'm
10 the attorney with The South Carolina Office of
11 Regulatory Staff.

12 MR. PRINGLE: Okay. And then, Ms.
13 Cecil, if you'd go ahead and swear our witness in
14 and then we can go from there.

15 ANDREW CHOATE,
16 being first duly sworn, testified as follows:

17 EXAMINATION

18 BY MR. PRINGLE:

19 Q. Okay. Well, let's get started. Mr.
20 Choate, as indicated already, my name is Jack
21 Pringle and I represent the applicant in this case.

22 Could you state your full name and
23 business address for the record and the court
24 reporter?

25 A. Yes. My name is Andrew Choate. The

ANDREW CHOATE - EX. BY MR. PRINGLE

1 business is the Lake Wylie Man, Incorporated. And
2 the address for that business is 7020 Chelsea Day
3 Lane, Tega Cay, South Carolina 29708.

4 Q. Tell me a little bit about what you do
5 for a living.

6 A. I'm a licensed realtor and I am in the
7 Charlotte area, right on the border, so I work in
8 both North and South Carolina.

9 Q. Okay. How long have you been doing
10 that?

11 A. I've been in the business in different
12 capacities for 19 years. In my current sort of role
13 as a general brokerage agent, it goes back to 2010.

14 Q. And you mentioned you're sort of in the
15 Charlotte area that encompasses some of North and
16 South Carolina?

17 A. Uh-huh.

18 Q. Where have you practiced and done the
19 kinds of things that you do over the 19 years that
20 you've been in what I guess is the real estate
21 business?

22 A. Yes. And I've spent some of that period
23 kind of working as a homebuilder and, you know,
24 selling new homes and that sort of thing as well;
25 but most of my business has been done kind of, as

ANDREW CHOATE - EX. BY MR. PRINGLE

1 far as South Carolina, in the counties, you know,
2 sort of communities right just south of the border.
3 So Fort Mill, Tega Cay, Rock Hill, York, some
4 Lancaster County areas, Indian Land specifically.

5 Q. Okay. So that would be, at least in
6 South Carolina, principally in York County --

7 A. Right.

8 Q. -- Lancaster County and maybe Chester
9 County?

10 A. Not much in Chester. Primarily just
11 York and Lancaster County, yes.

12 Q. And that encompasses, as you mentioned,
13 Rock Hill and Tega Cay and a few other towns and
14 areas?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Okay. So what kind of things do you do
17 on a day-to-day basis as a realtor?

18 A. You know, we list homes for people when
19 they want to put them on the market. We work with
20 buyers, showing homes. We help, you know, in both
21 of those capacities. You know, sometimes we get
22 involved with helping them locate contractors, you
23 know, movers, cleaners. You know, there's all types
24 of things that we -- we're a full-service agency, so
25 we do a little bit of everything, I guess --

ANDREW CHOATE - EX. BY MR. PRINGLE

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. -- in terms of buying and selling.

3 Q. And with respect to your agency and Lake
4 Wylie Man, Incorporated, other than yourself, how
5 many other -- how many other people do you work with
6 in the company?

7 A. Yes. So technically the Lake Wylie Man
8 is my corporation that I kind of run the business --
9 you know, most of my business through in terms of
10 income and that sort of thing. But I'm actually
11 officially licensed with Wilkinson ERA. That's the
12 name of the firm.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And they have -- I'm just a contractor
15 for them, so they have probably close to 600 agents,
16 you know, throughout the Charlotte metro area. My
17 team, my personal team, I have two other agents that
18 work for me directly and then a few staff people
19 that handle, you know, administrative and marketing
20 and those types of things.

21 Q. And we're talking about the current time
22 now or, I guess, generally how do you -- how do you
23 measure or gauge, for lack of a better term, how
24 busy you are or how much is going on in the business
25 of working for sellers and buyers who are buying and

ANDREW CHOATE - EX. BY MR. PRINGLE

1 selling homes?

2 A. Well, I guess a variety of ways. I
3 mean, I've been in it, you know, since I kind of --
4 I was a homebuilder before the recession primarily
5 and got into real estate during the recession. So,
6 you know, I've been in it now long enough to sort of
7 see the recovery and, you know, judge the amount of
8 business and traffic we see now versus, you know,
9 say 2010. But, you know, I look at, you know,
10 volume, you know, sales volume obviously and things
11 like that because that's how we make our living.

12 But we also look at, you know, how many
13 leads are coming in and number of listings, for
14 instance. I do a lot of listings and, you know,
15 listings are just -- they sell a lot faster now and
16 they're a lot harder to come by, which is a result,
17 direct result of just a lot more buyers and activity
18 in the market.

19 Q. Okay. And using I guess -- you know,
20 since we just got into 2018 and using what you know
21 about 2017 or, you know, even 2016, without giving
22 away anything that's proprietary or confidential,
23 can you share with me some of, you know, the
24 measures of the kind of activity that you're seeing
25 in terms of the real estate market and, as much as

ANDREW CHOATE - EX. BY MR. PRINGLE

1 you can, about South Carolina? But if it involves,
2 you know, the Charlotte area, that's okay, too.

3 A. Yeah. You know, a lot of my business, I
4 focus heavily on waterfront properties around Lake
5 Wylie specifically. So, you know, it's sort of just
6 split in two. Part of it's North Carolina, part of
7 it's South Carolina, so my business is a little bit
8 unique. But, you know, we do a lot of
9 non-waterfront, you know, kind of more traditional
10 sales as well.

11 And, you know, I just -- we have a lot
12 of buyers we're working with and, you know, at this
13 time, you know, actively looking. And like I said,
14 you know, a challenge for us is inventory right now.
15 So I think if we had more houses, we'd have even
16 more sales. It's just a matter of getting those.
17 So that's probably one of the biggest ones, you
18 know, that I look at, you know, looking at 2017.

19 Well, 2016 really was a record year for
20 us and just the market as a whole around, you know,
21 the lake specifically in terms of the number of
22 sales. And 2017 would have probably, you know,
23 surpassed that; but that the inventory issues, you
24 know, kind of caught up with that and, you know,
25 held the sales numbers back a little bit.

ANDREW CHOATE - EX. BY MR. PRINGLE

1 So, you know, I'm anticipating -- we
2 don't see any signs of any kind of slow down at this
3 point. You know, we have people activity. And for
4 my business, you know, this time of year, it's a
5 little bit slower than usual; but the spring is the,
6 you know, big selling season and we'll start to see
7 a lot more -- typically see a lot more inventory in
8 the market and more buyer activity and everything,
9 you know, as we start to move towards, you know,
10 March and April especially.

11 Q. For example, and let's use 2016, how
12 many -- how many listings did you have in 2016
13 relative to say 2010 or even 2012 or 2014?

14 A. Well, our business had kind of changed
15 and grown some anyways going back, you know,
16 comparing 2016 to 2010 because we had added agents
17 and that sort of thing; but, you know, I was
18 averaging probably somewhere between 75 and 100
19 listings at any given time, you know, I would say in
20 2014 and '15 and even part of '16. But, you know,
21 we're down right now.

22 I mean, I currently have about 35, so
23 I'm about half of what I would have had back then
24 and that's just -- you know, I think I attribute
25 much of that to just the marketplace and homes

ANDREW CHOATE - EX. BY MR. PRINGLE

1 selling a lot faster and that sort of thing than
2 they used to.

3 Q. Okay. And when you say homes are
4 selling faster, are there any measures of that that
5 you're aware of that just indicate that, other than
6 that you know that they're going a lot more quickly
7 and, as you say, you've got less inventory? Do you
8 know of any measures of the volume of home sales?

9 A. I do. You know, it's something I track
10 and we use our MLS system, for instance, that -- you
11 know, we can run reports and see, you know,
12 everything that's sold within certain time periods.
13 And it'll tell us, you know, how many days and what
14 was the average days on market and, you know, those
15 types of data. So, you know, it's shrunken
16 drastically.

17 I mean, it's -- you know, back in 2012,
18 you know -- again I deal with sort of a specialty
19 product, which is waterfront homes, and they're a
20 lot -- you know, they're much more unique and fewer
21 buyers and typically a higher price point than your
22 average home. So they always tend to take longer to
23 sell; but, you know, back then, the average days on
24 market for a waterfront home might be, you know,
25 eight months to a year. And this year or 2017 was

ANDREW CHOATE - EX. BY MR. PRINGLE

1 averaging less than three months, so. . .

2 Q. So it's fair to say it's still a pretty
3 hot market?

4 A. Yes. Yeah, I would agree with that.

5 Q. Okay. And then with that hot market and
6 a fair number of sales, you know, taking place, do
7 you have any experience or knowledge of people that
8 are moving, you know, from one place in South
9 Carolina to another place in South Carolina?

10 A. Yes, I do. I mean, we deal with a lot
11 of kinds of -- I'd say two sort of broad categories
12 I see a lot of buyers in. One is people moving from
13 other parts of the country to our area and a lot of
14 them to South Carolina, you know, for a variety of
15 different reasons, taxes or, you know, different
16 things, schools. In our area, the school systems
17 and some of the South Carolina areas are pretty
18 sought after, so that's kind of a drawing card; but,
19 you know, so we see those.

20 But then we also see a lot of people
21 that are on the North Carolina side of the border
22 moving out of Charlotte specifically and, a lot of
23 times it's for those same reasons, taxes and
24 schools, may move over the border, you know, because
25 we're still right there and so close to everything

ANDREW CHOATE - EX. BY MR. PRINGLE

1 else there that they be used to.

2 But I find that a lot of times, once
3 they come and move to South Carolina, they stay in
4 the area. So they may, you know -- could be if it
5 was a growing family. For instance, they may be in
6 the Fort Mill School District and want to stay
7 there; but they need a larger home, so they'd want
8 to move within that district, somewhere else into a
9 larger home.

10 And there's a lot of new development in
11 this area as well. So you see people maybe with
12 older homes selling them or, you know, even
13 sometimes downsizing. So that's something new. We
14 have quite a few retire -- you know, like active
15 adult type communities that are geared towards
16 retired people in the 55-plus age groups that have a
17 lot of amenities. So they may be selling a large
18 home here on the South Carolina side of the border
19 and moving into one of those types of communities.

20 Q. Okay. So you've got some active adult
21 retirement communities. Those are some of the new
22 developments going in?

23 A. Right.

24 Q. What other types of developments? Right
25 off the top of your head, do you know any of the

ANDREW CHOATE - EX. BY MR. PRINGLE

1 names of them or can you characterize the areas that
2 have new developments or where those --

3 A. Yeah. I mean, to be honest, there's so
4 many. I could throw out a few names, but I would
5 say the Fort Mill area. Indian Land, I mentioned
6 earlier, which is kind of just over the -- it's in
7 Lancaster County. Some of that area actually has a
8 Fort Mill address, but it's actually in a different
9 county. That area is being developed pretty heavily
10 right now.

11 There's a lot of new industry that has
12 sort of relocated to the area and it's drawing lots
13 of people in. Red Ventures is one of the big
14 companies over in that specific area that's been
15 really growing lately. And then the Lake Wylie or
16 Clover area, Clover School District area, which some
17 of that would have a York address or it could have a
18 Clover or Lake Wylie, South Carolina address.

19 There's at least five to ten I could
20 think of in that area right now, you know, either
21 being built in or under development, early stages,
22 that sort of thing. So lot of new development for
23 sure.

24 Q. Excellent. And you mentioned one
25 particular industry. Is it Red Industry?

ANDREW CHOATE - EX. BY MR. PRINGLE

1 A. Red Ventures --

2 Q. Yes.

3 A. -- is the name of it, yeah.

4 Q. R-e-d?

5 A. It's just over the border. Yeah.

6 R-e-d.

7 Q. Yes.

8 A. Ventures, V-e-n-t-u-r-e-s.

9 Q. What do they do?

10 A. I don't know exactly. I think they do a
11 lot of marketing, a lot of Internet type marketing
12 work and that sort of thing.

13 Q. Uh-huh.

14 A. They have some call centers and some
15 other things over at their main headquarters; but
16 they've been growing, I mean, building on, you know,
17 to their headquarters over there quite a bit.

18 Q. Okay. All right. And you mentioned
19 that you've been in the area, you know, for a number
20 of years. You may have said, you know, 19 years?

21 A. Right.

22 Q. How would you characterize York,
23 Lancaster -- York and Lancaster Counties, as well as
24 the Charlotte MSA in terms of population or
25 development since you've been there?

ANDREW CHOATE - EX. BY MR. PRINGLE

1 A. It has changed drastically. I grew up
2 in Charlotte, but I've lived in York County since
3 2002 when we moved -- moved down here, so, you know,
4 across the border as well. And, actually, my mother
5 was a teacher in Fort Mill when I was a kid, you
6 know, up until I was in college, I think, when she
7 retired.

8 And Fort Mill, for instance, back then
9 had three schools. They all sat right next to each
10 other, elementary, middle and high school. There's
11 now -- they're building their third high school.
12 Those three schools are all actually just one of the
13 main high schools now and they've built probably 10
14 or 15 schools since then. So, you know, Fort Mill,
15 you know, especially is an area that's really
16 changed and grown over the last few years.

17 Q. Sure. Sure. And so in addition to
18 those areas, have you come across in your, you know,
19 representation of buyers and sellers -- and I guess
20 this would mostly be buyers, have you gained any
21 knowledge of people that are moving either from
22 other parts in South Carolina to these areas or from
23 these areas to other parts of South Carolina?

24 A. Yes. Yeah. I mean, we see, you know,
25 it tends to be -- right off the top of my head, sort

ANDREW CHOATE - EX. BY MR. PRINGLE

1 of some of the other more heavily populated cities
2 of South Carolina, Columbia, Greenville,
3 Spartanburg, Charleston. Sometimes I see some from
4 the Clemson area, which I guess is still, you know,
5 Spartanburg and some of those areas down there.
6 But, yes, we do. Do see people, you know, leaving
7 here to go there or moving here, same reasons, you
8 know, job relocation, things like that.

9 Q. Sure. Sure. You know, based upon what
10 you know and from your day-to-day business
11 experience and your knowledge of the area and of
12 various real estate trends and other market
13 observations, do you think there's a present need or
14 a demand for additional intrastate moving services
15 in South Carolina?

16 A. Yeah, I would. I believe there is. And
17 I think, with as much moving as is going, there's
18 got to be a definite demand there.

19 Q. Okay. Do you think there's enough
20 business to go around if JB Movers is granted
21 statewide authority to do intrastate moves in South
22 Carolina?

23 A. Yeah, I would think there is.

24 Q. If JB Movers gets authority from the
25 Commission, would you be in a position to recommend

ANDREW CHOATE - EX. BY MR. PRINGLE

1 JB Movers or to refer moves to JB Movers?

2 A. Yes, I would.

3 Q. Okay. Is that something -- and I don't,
4 you know, don't know the answer to this and I got to
5 be a little bit hesitant of this; but does Wilkinson
6 or your organization have an established sort of
7 referral network for movers that JB Movers might get
8 to be a part of?

9 A. Yeah. I don't know for certain about
10 our firm, the greater firm, I would say; but we do
11 have -- they do have some types of arrangements like
12 that. But I know, for our team, yeah, we definitely
13 would.

14 Q. Okay. Do you have any personal
15 knowledge regarding JB Movers and how it does
16 business?

17 A. Yes. I've had some clients on the North
18 Carolina transactions that have used them in the
19 past and seem to be happy. You know, we usually try
20 to make sure everything goes well if it's somebody
21 we've, you know, given a name to just to make sure
22 we don't have any issues. So, yeah, that was my
23 past experience with them.

24 Q. Okay. And so based upon that
25 experience, you'd recommend them for South Carolina

ANDREW CHOATE - EX. BY MS. PITTMAN

1 movers the same way you have -- excuse me, South
2 Carolina moves the same way you have with respect to
3 North Carolina moves?

4 A. Right. Yes.

5 MR. PRINGLE: Okay. Mr. Choate, thank
6 you very much. I don't have anymore questions, so
7 please answer any questions that Ms. Pittman may
8 have for you.

9 THE WITNESS: Okay.

10 EXAMINATION

11 BY MS. PITTMAN:

12 Q. Mr. Choate, I think you answered all of
13 my questions. How long have you known Mr. Bruce or
14 known of JB Movers?

15 A. Good question. It's probably -- my
16 experience? Probably four or five years maybe.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. So you're pretty familiar with them?

20 A. Yeah. I mean, you know, not everybody
21 that we deal with uses them or anything like that;
22 but, you know, when people ask, we always try to
23 have some names available for, you know, movers,
24 contractors, whatever it is, so -- but yeah.

25 Q. And do you -- with most of the people

ANDREW CHOATE - EX. BY MS. PITTMAN

1 that you're dealing with buying and selling homes,
2 do they figure out movers on their own or do you get
3 a lot of questions about movers?

4 A. It's -- I'd say I get a fair amount,
5 maybe half and half if I had to guess. It just kind
6 of depends on the situation, you know, where they're
7 coming from or whether they're moving into the area
8 or someone that's already here, that sort of thing,
9 so -- because we work with a lot of buyers and
10 sellers.

11 MS. PITTMAN: Okay. Sounds good.
12 That's all I have.

13 THE WITNESS: Okay.

14 MR. PRINGLE: Okay. And I think, and
15 this is for the court reporter's benefit, I think
16 Mr. Choate is going to waive reading and signing.
17 Is that correct, Mr. Choate?

18 THE WITNESS: Yes, that's fine.

19 MR. PRINGLE: Okay. Well, good. Well,
20 thanks a bunch for taking some time out to do this.
21 We appreciate that. And is it snowing up there by
22 any chance?

23 THE WITNESS: No. It's been cold, very
24 cold; but no snow.

25 MR. PRINGLE: Yes. Apparently, it's

ANDREW CHOATE - EX. BY MS. PITTMAN

1 snowing in Charleston and the schools and state
2 government -- in fact, I think Ms. Pittman actually
3 has got her feet up and is lounging at home while
4 I'm working away here in the office.

5 MS. PITTMAN: Oh, yes, that is accurate.

6 MR. PRINGLE: Well, we'll just leave it
7 at that; but it certainly is cold. Appreciate your
8 time.

9 THE WITNESS: Sure.

10 MR. PRINGLE: And I guess we'll end it
11 up at this point. Thank you very much.

12 THE WITNESS: Okay. Thank you.

13 MS. PITTMAN: Thank y'all.

14 (The deposition was concluded at 1:26
15 p.m.)

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1 CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER
2

3 I, Wanda K. Cecil, Certified Court
4 Reporter and Notary Public for the State of South
5 Carolina at Large, do hereby certify that the
6 foregoing transcript is a true, accurate, and
7 complete record.

8 I further certify that I am neither
9 related to nor counsel for any party to the cause
10 pending or interested in the events thereof.

11 Witness my hand, I have hereunto affixed
12 my official seal this 4th day of January, 2018 at
13 Columbia, Richland County, South Carolina.
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Wanda K. Cecil
Certified Court Reporter
My Commission expires
December 28, 2026

1	I N D E X		
2		Page	Line
3	<u>ANDREW CHOATE</u>	3	15
4	EXAMINATION	3	17
5	BY MR. PRINGLE		
6	EXAMINATION	18	10
7	BY MS. PITTMAN		
8	CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER	21	1
9			
10			
11	REQUESTED INFORMATION INDEX		
12			
13	(No Information Requested)		
14			
15			
16			
17	E X H I B I T S		
18			
19	(No Exhibits Proffered)		
20			
21			
22			
23			
24			
25			